

# International

# Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 4

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## Message from the Mayor

During the past month, I had the opportunity to meet with 26 university presidents from China. Education and innovation remain major factors for continued economic growth. The establishment of a framework for future collaboration with China by way of mutually beneficial partnerships, in areas such as research and education, will expand Houston's economic promise.



*Bill White*

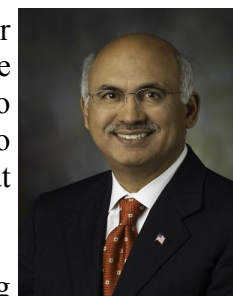
Also in the past month, we hosted a delegation from Calgary, Canada, as part of the bilateral partnership agreement I had signed with Mayor Bronconnier in June of 2006. While in Houston, the delegation met with leading Houston area stakeholders to facilitate cooperation in the fields of engineering, life sciences, education, culture and arts.

As we continue to promote cooperation between our city and other countries around the globe, we further enhance Houston's reputation as a dynamic and international city.

**Bill White, Mayor**

## Message from the Chairman, International Liaison and Protocol Committee (ILPC), City Council

Although much of my work as a Council Member is supporting our international communities here in Houston, I sometimes get the opportunity to travel outside of Houston to speak directly to other international communities about our great city.



*M.J. Khan*

In early March, I had the privilege of representing Houston in Washington, D.C., where I participated in a recorded interview hosted by the U.S. State Department. I also had the opportunity to answer questions from journalists and students in Morocco, India, Sri Lanka, and Liberia about my work as a Houston City Council Member. The Web Cast of this interview is being broadcast online and overseas and will allow thousands more people to learn about Houston and our work at City Council.

Link to the web cast: <http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webcasts.html>

**M. J. Khan, Council Member**

# Highlights of Upcoming Events

## Easter Italian Week

April 2-6—The Italian Consulate and the Italy America Chamber of Commerce present Easter Italian Week, with events highlighting Italian culture, art, and education. For more information, please contact The Italy America Chamber of Commerce at (713) 626-9309.

## Vietnam – Asia's Ascending Dragon

April 4—The U.S. Commercial Service will present "Vietnam, Asia's Ascending Dragon," an occasion to learn about export opportunities to Vietnam and economic trade between the U.S. and Asia. The event will take place at the International Trade Center Ballroom, at 8:00 AM. For more information, please contact [john\\_tr@yahoo.com](mailto:john_tr@yahoo.com).

## Best Practices

April 12th—The Swedish American Chamber of Commerce, Jackson Walker LLP & McLane - Grassman & Company will host "Best Practices," an educational colloquium on how to manage Human Resources nowadays. For more information, please contact [sacchouston@gmail.com](mailto:sacchouston@gmail.com).

## Center for Houston's Future

April 17—The Center for Houston's Future will host its annual luncheon at the Hilton Americas Hotel with keynote speaker David Leebron, President of Rice University. Bill Barnett will be honored with this year's prestigious Vaughan Leadership Award. For more information, please contact [www.centerforhoustonfuture.org](http://www.centerforhoustonfuture.org).

## Houston International Festival

April 19-29—The 2007 Houston International Festival will return to downtown Houston, this year featuring China. It will include the Mayor's Gala on April 19, and a conference on China-Houston bilateral relationship on April 21. For more information, please visit [www.ifest.org](http://www.ifest.org).

## Brazil Energy & Power

April 23—The Brazil-Texas Chamber of Commerce will host the "Brazil Energy & Power," gathering leaders from public and private sectors to discuss issues that impact energy, oil and gas. The keynote speaker will be Mr. Newton Monteiro Reis, Director of the National Petroleum Agency. For more information, please visit [www.braziltexas.org](http://www.braziltexas.org).

## Professional Program Development

April 23-27—The Grant Institute will offer a five-day intensive and interactive course in which participants will be led through program development, grant writing, and funding acquisition processes. The program will be held at the Hilton University of Houston Hotel. For more information, please contact (888) 824-4424.

## Port of Houston Authority

April 27 - May 4—The Port of Houston Authority will host the International Association of Ports and Harbors for the 2007 World Ports Conference. IAPH Conferences are a biennial reunion of the world port family to discuss issues of interest and to get acquainted with emerging technology. For more information, please visit [www.iaph2007.com](http://www.iaph2007.com).

## Offshore Technology Conference 2007

April 30 - May 3—Founded in 1969, the Offshore Technology Conference is the world's foremost event for the development of offshore resources in the fields of drilling, exploration, production and environmental protection. OTC is held annually at Reliant Park in Houston. For more information, please visit [www.otcnet.org](http://www.otcnet.org).

## **Mayor's International Affairs and Development Council (MIADC)**

*Each month, we bring you the latest updates on the developments of the MIADCs: Africa, Americas, Asia/Australia, Canada, Europe, Middle East/North Africa and South Asia.*

### **Europe**

March 5—Members of the Business Development and Marketing Committee presented the council with the final draft of the Europe/Texas Business Briefing. The Council will meet in April to discuss how to distribute the information.

### **Africa**

March 8—The President of Ethiopian Airlines, Mr. Girma Wake, met at the Greater Houston Partnership with members of the Africa Council to discuss local support for a possible direct route from Houston to Africa.

### **Canada**

March 19—Nadine Eidman, the new chair of the Canada Council convened the first meeting of the new term. Members met with Consul David McGregor to discuss Council projects and prepare for the coming visit of three delegates from Calgary.

### **Asia/ Australia**

March 22—Under the leadership of the 2006 outgoing chair, Alex Chae, and 2007 incoming chair, Glen Gondo, members met and elected Linda Toyota and Greg Foley to the positions of chair-elect and secretary, respectively.

### **Americas**

March 26—The chairmanship of MIADC/Americas passed from Alex Giannotti to Eberto Amador. Americas members later elected Marco Bracamontes and Rosanna Moreno to the positions of chair-elect and secretary, respectively.

### **South Asia**

March 28—Members of the South Asia Council met under the leadership of the new chair, Ahmad Durrani, and elected Jagat Kamdar and Sajaad Burki to the positions of chair-elect and secretary, respectively.

## **The Global Bridge: The Greater Southwest Houston Chamber of Commerce (GSHCC)**

*Each month, the International Newsletter features "the Global Bridge" section, which introduces local business organizations dedicated to promoting Houston's international image.*



Trish Wise

Having recently received its third accreditation from the United States Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Southwest Houston Chamber of Commerce (GSHCC) is the only chamber in Houston to hold that honor. This designation attests to the integrity and exceptionally high standards of the 58-year old business organization. The Chamber serves a varied group of members located in an area stretching from the Texas Medical Center to the Beltway and from I-10 to South Main.

The diversity of the area encourages the Chamber to look

for ways to partner with all facets of the community to achieve mutually beneficial goals. Through a variety of programs, including a Community Outreach Council and Chairman's Chats in various locales, the Chamber keeps in touch with elected officials as well as with business districts and all four cities within its boundaries.

As a not-for-profit volunteer organization, the Chamber's policies and direction are set by a 21-member board. Committees engage in activities in areas such as education, business resources, and economic development. The Chamber also sponsors the Young Professionals Network and the Women's Information

Network, and houses two non-profit entities: the Helen & Clyde Willbern Scholarship Foundation, which has provided more than \$500,000 in funding for Career and Technology Education students, and Leadership 20/20, which is a 15-year-old award winning community-based adult leadership development program.

According to President and CEO Trish Wise, the GSHCC is "poised to broaden its scope and influence in the areas of government affairs and economic development as we head toward our sixth decade of *Connecting Commerce & Community*."

—By Trish Wise



# Qatar

This month we visit a country located on the west coast of the Arabian Peninsula -- where sand dunes meet sapphire waters and ancient forts give way to high-rise office buildings -- to speak to the Honorable Rashid Al Khater, Consul General of Qatar in Houston.



*Consul General  
Rashid Al-Khater*

Qatar is a vibrant country, growing and changing ever more rapidly while still preserving the essence of its culture. A leader in the areas of energy and education, Qatar has been able to profit from its natural resources, and invest the surplus in its dynamic cities.

The most dynamic of all is the capital city of Doha, which is the country's economic center, and where the companies Qatar Petroleum and Qatar Gas are headquartered, and where other global companies such as Shell, Exxon Mobil and ConocoPhillips have set up regional offices.

Although the energy industry and education are prominent factors in both Houston and Doha, according to the Consul General Rashid Al Khater, the deeper commonality between the two cities is found "in the feeling of their people: both are friendly, peaceful, generous and humble."

Posted since 2004 to the Qatar Consulate in Houston, which oversees 16 states, Consul General Al Khater's main goal has been "to work hard, in order to provide the best relationship possible between Texas and Qatar, in a search to further the relationship with Houston."

Given Consul General Al Khater's impressive background, which includes a degree in political science and sociology from Minnesota State University, 22 years in Qatar's foreign service --- including posts in the Qatar Embassy in Washington, the Qatar Mission in New York, the Qatar Consulate in Mumbai, the Qatar Embassy in Muscat, Oman, and the Qatar Embassy in Bonn, Germany --- Consul General Al Khater draws on

his international experience to achieve this goal.

It is Consul General Al Khater's personal belief that "if you work hard, you get promoted." There is more to his success than hard work. His hobbies, which include reading any and all materials related to international relations, illustrate that his greatest passion is his work. This is best expressed by the Consul General's own statement that through his job he is achieving his dream.

According to Consul General Al Khater, the Consulate is committed to preserving its strong ties with Houston. This partnership was further enhanced by the visit of Qatar's Emir, H.E. Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani to Houston in 2005. Also, Texas A&M has recently opened a branch in Qatar with the support of the Qatari government. "I look forward, as a Consul General, to forge and strengthen the relation between the state of Qatar and Texas, particularly between the United States and Qatar," said Consul General Al Khater.

—By Michelle Kneeland



*Map of Qatar*

### Did You Know?

Qatar's education initiatives have attracted several major American universities to open branches, among them are Carnegie Mellon, Georgetown, Texas A&M, Virginia Commonwealth and Cornell.

Source: [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

# Connections Across the Globe:

*This month we track developments taking place within the Houston Airport System, the Port of Houston Authority and Sister Cities of Houston*

## Houston Airport System (HAS)

On March 12, the Greater Houston Partnership held a luncheon in honor of the Foreign Trade Corporation of Costa Rica and the Costa Rican Association of Flower Growers (ACOFLO). The event was attended by the Honorable Sergio Alonso Valverde Alpizar, Consul General of Costa Rica in Houston; Rick Vacar, Director of the Houston Airport System; Renee Carpenter, former president of Allied Florists of Houston; and a host of local and floral industry insiders.

The still-under-construction new perishables cooling facility at George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH) means new business opportunities for Costa Rica's flower growers who would be able to export their wide variety of flowers to Houston's booming market.

Slated to open later this year, the 60,000 square foot cargo-handling facility is located in the IAH Cargo Center and will offer direct ramp access for cargo airlines as well as importers and

distributors of perishable goods. For countries like Costa Rica, Houston is a much-anticipated new gateway into the robust U.S. consumer market.

"You don't have to takeover the entire pie to be successful," said Renee Carpenter of the city's new air cargo venture. "The (flower) industry is so large that even if you just take a small piece of the pie, you will be profitable."

— By Juan M. Alanis, HAS

## Port of Houston Authority (PHA)

The Texas Workforce Commission has awarded a \$987,620 grant to a consortium of organizations to help build and expand upon the skill level of workers at Houston's port locations. A formal award presentation was held on February 23 at the PHA's Executive Office Building.

Grant recipients include San Jacinto College and the West

Gulf Maritime Association (WGMA), and draw support from the PHA, International Longshoreman's Association (ILA), the Economic Alliance Houston Port Region and The WorkSource.

The organizations will work together to provide the technical training necessary to add more than 1,500 skilled workers – 570 new and 1,060 upgraded jobs – to

the local maritime industry.

This grant will provide more focused and standardized training across the industry, with increased emphasis on technology acquisition as well as safety requirements and Homeland Security.

— By Edwin Henry, PHA

## Sister Cities of Houston (SCH)



SCH area of Houston I-fest

Following the success of last year's Sister Cities World's Fare at the Houston International Festival, preparations are being

made for participation in iFest 2007. The Wine Bar and Sister Cities Stage have moved to Sam Houston Park.

The People's Republic of China will be this year's featured country. Shenzhen, one of Houston's sixteen "twin" cities, will be highlighted, with Chinese acrobats and dancers entertaining the crowds. Ethnic songs and dances of other associations will be performed at the festival during April 21-22-

April 28-29.

Additional SCH events for April are the Houston's Young Moviemakers' Awards Ceremony, which will take place on April 15 at the MFAH, and the Children's Day Parade on April 20 at Hermann Square, City Hall. Please contact (713) 227-3395 for more information.

—By Ellen I. Goldberg, SCH

# Promoting Houston Globally:

*This month we track developments taking place in the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau (GHCVB)*

According to the World Tourism Organization, China will have more than 100 million outbound travelers annually by the year 2020, making it the largest potential outbound Tourism market in the world. The GHCVB has been actively promoting Houston as a travel destination in China.

At the request of Mayor Bill White, the GHCVB Tourism office formed a China Tourism Task Force, comprised of local leaders from the business, entertainment, government and education sectors.

The goal of this task force has been to develop the best marketing strategy to lure Chinese outbound leisure and business travelers to Houston, which is in a position to capitalize on these travelers due to our business climate, unique tourist attractions and international diversity.

While the task force will make recommendations on easing governmental restrictions on Chinese travelers, it is also focusing on student travelers.

The Educational Sub-committee—consisting of members from Rice University, St. Thomas University, University of Houston and Houston Community College—predicts that student travelers, those interested in studying at Houston institutions, might have the greatest impact, both short-term and long-term, on travel from China, and will propose a university consortium to present and promote Houston as a premiere destination for education.

The task force hopes to present Mayor White with a final set of recommendations in late spring 2007.

—By Daniel Palomo, GHCVB

## Houston Dynamo

2006 was a year of great success for the Houston Dynamo, who won the MLS Cup in their first year of existence in the Bayou City, thus putting an exclamation point on a season that was nothing short of extraordinary. Yet 2007 provides new opportunities for growth and international exposure.

Apart from defending their title as MLS Cup Champions in the 2007 regular season, the Dynamo will also participate in the CONCACAF Champions' Cup, the U.S. Open Cup, and the newly-developed SuperLiga Tournament, played between the top four teams in Mexico and the U.S. The CONCACAF Champions' Cup is

the pre-eminent and longest running club tournament in the western hemisphere. If the Dynamo win the CONCACAF Champions' Cup, they will be automatically entered in the FIFA World Club Championships, held in Japan. There, the team will compete against the champions of the World's different soccer federations. From there the team could advance to the Copa Nissan Sudamericana, the second-most prestigious tournament in South America.

For more information, please call the Houston Dynamo Ticket Line, at (713) 276-7500, or you can visit [www.houstondynamo.com](http://www.houstondynamo.com).

—By Lester Gretch, Houston Dynamo

[www.houstontx.gov/moiad](http://www.houstontx.gov/moiad)

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**Next Submission Deadline:  
April 20, 2007**

## April 2007

| Date | Time     | Event   | Venue                             | Contact                         |
|------|----------|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 4/1  | Noon     | Univision Radio: La Feria de la Mujer   | George R. Brown Convention Center | www.univisionradio.com          |
| 4/2  | --       | Texas-China 2007, Texas Business & Investment Mission to Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Shenzhen, Dongguan & Guangzhou (through April 16)               | TBD                               | james.chen@governor.state.tx.us |
|      | 6:00 PM  | Consulates General of France, Germany, Italy & the Honorary Consulates of Belgium and the Netherlands: The United States and the European Integration | Univ. of St. Thomas, Scanlon Room | culturale.houston@esteri.it     |
| 4/4  | 8:00 AM  | U.S. Commercial Service: Vietnam—Asia's Ascending Dragon  | International Trade Center        | John_tr@yahoo.com               |
| 4/5  | 7:30 AM  | Houston Networking News: HNN Lead Exchange & Referrals Breakfast  | Amazon Grill Restaurant           | (281) 778-6661                  |
|      | 6:00 PM  | World Affairs Council of Houston: The Shia Revival—How Conflicts within Islam will Shape the Future   | The Junior League                 | www.hwac.net                    |
| 4/11 | 11:30 AM | World Affairs Council of Houston: The Challenge of International Leadership—How America must Prepare  | Hyatt Regency Hotel               | www.hwac.net                    |
|      | —        | Japan-America Society of Houston: Japan Month in Houston (through April 30)   | TBD                               | jash@jashouston.org             |
| 4/12 | 11:30 AM | The Swedish American Chamber of Commerce & Jackson Walker LLP: "Best Practices"— Managing Human Resources in the U.S.                                 | Masraff's Restaurant              | (713) 914-0015                  |
| 4/14 | —        | Japan-America Society of Houston: 14th Houston Japan Festival   | TBD                               | jash@jashouston.org             |
| 4/15 | 1:00 PM  | Museum of Fine Arts Houston: Houston's Young Moviemakers 2007 Awards Program  | MFAH Brown Auditorium             | (713) 639-7378                  |
| 4/16 | 11:30 AM | Greater Houston Partnership: April 2007 Quarterly Meeting   | InterContinental Hotel            | jreese@houston.org              |
| 4/17 | 11:30 AM | World Affairs Council of Houston: Venezuela—Conflicting U.S. Interests  | Hyatt Regency Hotel               | www.hwac.net                    |
|      | 11:30 AM | Asia Society Texas Center & Korea Economic Institute: Ambassadors' Dialogue—Focus on Korea  | The Houstonian Hotel              | (713) 439-0051                  |
|      | Noon     | Center for Houston's Future: Annual Luncheon 2007   | Hilton Americas Hotel             | (713) 844-9325                  |
| 4/18 | 11:30 AM | Asia Society Texas Center & The Nature Conservancy: Is Good Environment Good Business?  | Westin Galleria Hotel             | (713) 439-0051                  |
|      | Noon     | Houston Minority Business Council: Networking Luncheon  | J.W. Marriott Hotel               | evelyn.flores@hmbc.org          |
|      | 6:30 PM  | Turkish American Association for Business: 2007 Annual Dinner   | The Houstonian Hotel              | ucart@yahoo.com                 |
| 4/19 | Noon     | Houston International Protocol Alliance: Learn at Lunch—Saudi Arabia  | Visitors Center Theater           | thardikar@ghcvb.org             |
|      | 1:00 PM  | Bilateral U.S. Arab Chamber of Commerce: Micro Development Luncheon—Roundtable Discussion with Dr. Hanan Ashrawi                                      | St. Regis Hotel                   | pro-grams@bilateralchamber.org  |
|      | 6:00 PM  | World Affairs Council of Houston: U.S.-Cuban Relations—Forever Midnight?  | Westin Galleria Hotel             | www.hwac.net                    |



|      |          |   |                                   |                                 |
|------|----------|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 4/19 | 6:30 PM  | Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Arte Publico Press & Nuestra Palabra: Latino Writers having Their Say—Mexican Women were my Mr. Miyagi         | Museum of Fine Arts Houston       | www.mfah.org                    |
|      | 7:30 PM  | City of Houston & Houston Festival Foundation: The Mayor's Gala   | Westin Galleria                   | (713) 654-8808                  |
| 4/20 | —        | Worldfest Houston International Film & Video Festival (through April 29)  | AMC 30, Dunvale                   | (713) 965-9955                  |
| 4/21 | 8:00 AM  | Houston International Festival: Business Conference—Today & Tomorrow for Houston & China  | Hyatt Regency Hotel               | (713) 654-8808                  |
|      | 1:00 PM  | Houston International Festival: China (Saturdays & Sundays through April 29)  | Downtown Hermann Square           | (713) 654-8808                  |
| 4/23 | 8:00 AM  | The Grant Institute: Certificate in Professional Program Development & Grant Communication (through April 27)                               | Univ. of Houston - Hilton Hotel   | (888) 824-4424                  |
|      | —        | Brazil-Texas Chamber of Commerce & Rio de Janeiro American Chamber of Commerce: Brazil Energy & Power VI                                    | Westchase Marriott Hotel          | chamber@braziltexas.org         |
| 4/24 | 8:30 AM  | Bilateral U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce: Navigating the Legal and Commercial Waters in Libya  | Office of Bracewell & Giuliani    | programs@bilateralchamber.org   |
|      | 11:30 AM | Bilateral U.S. & Arab Chamber of Commerce & World Affairs Council of Houston: Egypt's Role in the Middle East                               | Westin Galleria Hotel             | www.hwac.net                    |
| 4/26 | 7:30 PM  | The Irish Society: The Irish Language: Successes & Challenges of Language Planning in Ireland & the Future of Irish in a 'Globalized World' | Univ. of St. Thomas - Cullen Hall | TheIrishSociety.org             |
|      | —        | Museum of Fine Arts Houston: Latin Wave— New Films from Latin America   | MFAH Brown Auditorium             | (713) 639-7378                  |
| 4/27 | 7:00 AM  | Houston Technology Center: Educational Seminar Series—Turbo-Charge Your Sales Engine to Accelerate Growth                                   | Houston Technology Center         | (713) 658-1750                  |
|      | 6:00 PM  | Asia Chamber of Commerce: 12th Annual Gala—Reach for a Magical Dream  | Westin Galleria Hotel             | elsiehuang@asianchamber-hou.org |
|      | 8:30 AM  | Sino-US Energy Market Development & Risk Management Symposium (through April 29)  | West Loop Marriot Hotel           | www.ChinaEnergyRisk.org         |
|      | —        | International Association of Ports & Harbors: IAPH 2007—25th World Ports Conference—Houston (through May 4)                                 | Hilton Americas Hilton            | www.iaph2007.com                |
| 4/30 | —        | Offshore Technology Conference 2007 (through May 3)   | Reliant Center                    | www.otcnet.org/2007             |
|      | 6:00 PM  | Bilateral U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce: Offshore Technology Conference Reception—Tenth Year Anniversary                                    | Westin Galleria Hotel             | programs@bilateralchamber.org   |

*We have one simple goal: to promote Houston as a renowned international city.*